Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

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PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

Here we go at the start of a new season! As usual our Editor is on the ball and has produced our first number in good time; we must all thank Michael Birks for the fine job he does in keeping our Newsletter going. Contributions are as always welcome and we hope to hear from YOU!

There is plenty planned for the next Spanish Main season; first our opening day will be 19th September and as usual the venue will be the Allenby Room at the Victory Services Club. It will be an exciting meeting; our three members who will be exhibiting at the International Exhibition, HAFNIA, in Copenhagen will be giving us a preview of what they are to show there - Professor J C West (Chile), our Editor Michael Birks (Nicaragua) and Dr Richard Saundry (Costa Rica). We look forward to a maximum attendance to give our members a good send off!

Other important meetings include our bi-annual auction on Saturday November 28th - Brian Moorhouse will doubtless be sending us all full details in due course; then there will be the Spanish Main Cup and our Spanish Main Annual General meeting on Saturday December 12th. This comprises a 12 or 16 page entry of anything to do with Latin American philately or postal history; the vital rule is that the entry must be visually attractive and interesting to any member without necessarily detailed knowledge of what is being shown. All entries welcome and please support us. Entries from overseas should be sent to Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, PETERBOROUGH PE3 8TQ, and his VAT number (211 8558 60) should be quoted in the address when sending an exhibit.

We shall soon be planning a Central American meeting for the Spring of next year and I shall be glad to hear from members interested in supporting this meeting.

52 St Leonards Road
Newton Abbot
Devon TQ12 1JX

John Fosbery
President, The Spanish Main

We continue our translation of Danilo Mueses book "Seebeck, Hero or Villain", completing El Salvador and starting Honduras

THE PROVISIONAL POSTAL STATIONERY OF NICARAGUA

by D N KILNER

The main period of surcharging and overprinting of the cards and envelopes of Nicaragua was from 1901 to 1916; this article is a description of the various types of surcharges and overprints used by the postal authorities.

1889 The story starts in this year with the 1888 10 centavos violet on blue postal stationery envelope (H&G 2) overprinted "5/CENTAVOS/5" in red (150mm x 200mm, figure 1). Since all postal records have been destroyed the reason for this surcharge can only be guessed at. It is possible that the postal authorities were running short of the 5 centavos postal stationery envelope for internal use and had to fill the gap until the supply of Seebeck material, due in 1890, became available.

fig 1

At the time of writing there have been three examples of this envelope reported, used in 1889.

1. A report in Stanley Gibbons Magazine of 20th August 1890 which quoted a report that appeared in the Metropolitan Philatelist of one of the envelopes being used from Leon on the 27th November 1889 to New York. The envelope was treated as fully prepaid thought the postage rate to New York was 10 centavos.
2. Another envelope was used internally from Managua at the internal rate of 5 centavos.
3. A further envelope was used from Leon on 1st December 1889 to Germany, but had 15 centavos in postage added to make up the 20 centavos rate for a foreign letter over 15 grams in weight.

It would seem that from the second and third examples, the envelope was meant to be treated as a 5 centavos envelope, but possibly could be used for the foreign letter rate of 10 centavos (up to 15 grams in weight) without adding further postage - as in the first example. (I think it more likely the 5/../5 was mistaken for 5 + 5 - Ed.)

Notification of any further examples of this envelope of 1889 would be very welcome.

1899 To overcome the shortage at Bluefields in late 1899, various provisionals were made by cutting the stamps from stamped envelopes and affixing them to other stamped envelopes to make up the required rates. To quote from the report, "During the stamp famine period the postmaster at Bluefields manufactured provisional envelopes of the values of 5, 10 and 20 centavos" (Mekeel's Weekly, August 24, 1899).

"The Postage Stamp" of 1899, stated "a certain number of envelopes were impressed with the seal of the Treasury Department in violet, this being further overprinted with the Arms of the Republic in black". Values of 5, 10 and 20 centavos were mentioned.

The first type of provisional envelopes were stamped with a purple handstamp of 43mm diameter, in the right hand corner, the upper half of the circle reading "ADMINISTRACION DE RENTAS" and the lower half reading "BLUEFIELDS NIC.". This was then imprinted with the Arms of Nicaragua in black with a straight line underneath, and below this line the value of the envelope, namely 5c, 10c or 20c (fig 2).

Fig 2

fig 3

A variety occurs on the 10 centavos envelope, where there is no black line under the Arms of Nicaragua and the value is expressed as 10 CTVOS (with a large C, fig 3). This second type of envelope has the wording in the purple handstamp altered to "ADMINISTRACION DE RENTAS DE BLUEFIELDS" in the upper half of the circle and "REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA" in the lower part. The writer assumes that the second type consists of the same values, and contains the same variety, as the first.

1901 In 1899 the Seebeck contract expired and another contract was eventually entered into with a Dr Maximo Asenjo on the 11th May 1899, for the supply of all stamps and postal supplies, for a continuous period of 10years. The contract became effective from the 1st January 1900. Asenjo transferred the contract to an unknown speculator who placed an order with the American Bank Note Co., for the first year's supply. Delivery was made but the Nicaraguan authorities never gave the speculator the agreed 50,000 cancelled to order sets, which was the speculators only recompense, and so no further stamps or stationery were supplied. Nicaragua was compelled to try to obtain all her own postal supplies, and owing to a lack of finances, the authorities were forced to resort to surcharging stamps and postal stationery which they had in stock. Postal stationery first treated this way was the 1900 Momotombo issue, and the stationery surcharged was the 6 centavos card and the 6 + 6 centavos reply paid card. Sometime in the late 1900's or early 1901, the foreign postcard rate was changed from 6 centavos to 5 centavos and in order to accommodate this change a two line surcharge (17mm x 14mm, fig 4) was applied to the 6 centavos and the 6 + 6 centavos cards (H&G 49 and 51).

fig 4

1903 In this year the postal authorities were running short of 5 centavos envelopes for internal use, so the 1898 5 centavos greyish-green envelope (H&G 40) was authorised for use overprinted by a violet handstamp inscribed "Habilitado" in both lower case (35mm x 5mm, fig 5) and capital letters (48mm x 5mm, fig 6).

fig 5

fig 6 fig 7

The 1900 red-violet Momotombo design 10 centavos envelope was also surcharged in violet "Vale 5 centavos" (51mm x 5xx, fig 7).

1904 This year showed the greatest activity in the creation of provisional postal stationery. Postal cards and envelopes for internal use had run out, and initially three types of 2 centavos surcharge were employed to fill the immediate demand.

fig 8

fig 9

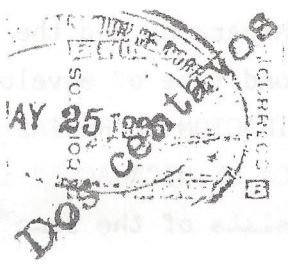


fig 10

All three surcharges are found on the 6c postal card of 1900 (H&G 49), and on both the message half, and the reply half of the 6+6c reply card of the same year (H&G 51). Additionally fig 10 is found on both halves of the 5+5c reply card of 1901 (H&G 53). In all cases the halves of the card were separated before surcharging.

fig 11

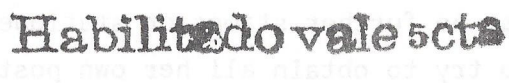


fig 12

Figures 11 and 12, "Habilitado 1904" measuring 55mm x 5mm and 68mm x 5mm respectively, were employed authorising various cards and reply cards. The former authorised a variety of 2 centavos single and reply cards (H&G 16, 18, 40, 42, 44 and 46), whilst the latter was used on a variety of cards of different face value (H&G 14 (5c), 16 (20c), 41 (10c), 46 (10c), 49 (30c) and 50 (50c).

1905 In 1905 a supply of postal stationery envelopes with a new Arms design was obtained from the American Bank Note Company Ltd., the denominations being 5 and 10 centavos (H&G 59 and 60). The 5 centavos envelope was for the internal letter rate, but for the 10 centavos envelope there was no rate at that time. Late in 1905

the internal letter rate was raised from 5 to 10 centavos and so the supply of the 10 centavos envelope might have been foresight on the part of the postal authorities. It would be interesting to know the date of delivery of both these items to Nicaraguan post offices.

The new supply of 5 centavos envelopes was insufficient, resulting in remainders of the 1900 Momotombo design envelopes being surcharged "Vale 5 cts." in violet (39mm x 5mm, fig 13). The envelopes surcharged were H&G 46 (10c), 49 (30c) and 50 (50c).

fig 13

fig 14

fig 14a

The rise in the letter rate from 5c to 10c would presumably have made the new 5c envelope with the Arms deisgn, obsolete, for along with further envelopes of the 1900 Momotombo design, it was surcharged "Vale 10 cts." in two forms; 41 x 5mm (circular 0), fig 14, and 38mm x 5mm (narrow 0), fig 14a. The envelopes surcharged were H&G 45 (5c), 48 (20c), 49 (30c) and 50 (50c) Momotombo, and 59 (5c) Arms.

1907 In 1907, further surcharging and overprinting of the postal cards and envelopes became necessary.

Postal Cards Late in 1905 the internal post card rate had risen from 2 to 4 centavos. In 1906 two postal stationery cards were received from the American Bank Note Co Ltd, the the new Coat of Arms design. The denominations were 2 centavos red and 5 centavos blue (H&G 66 and 66a), but it is believed that the latter was not issued regularly.

In 1907 a redrawn 4 centavos red card, printed by Waterlow and Sons Ltd, was received by the postal authorities. This was in the Momotombo design (H&G 65). The card was issued handstamped "1907" (17mm x 5mm, fig 15) in violet, and it is not known without this handstamp. Also in this year, the 2 centavos Coat of Arms design (H&G 66) was surcharged "Vale 4 cts" (37mm x 5mm, fig 16) in violet, both with a large and a small "4".

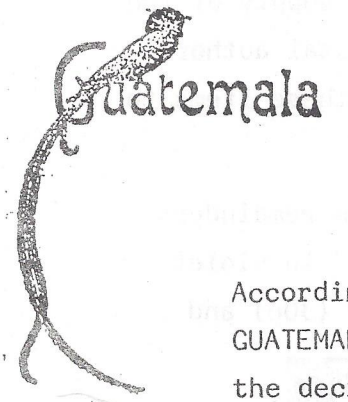
fig 15

fig 16

fig 17

Postal Envelopes A redrawn 10 centavos envelope was received from Waterlow and Sons Ltd, in the Momotombo design (H&G 69). This envelope was handstamped "1907" (17mm x 4mm or 7mm, fig 17) in violet, and it is believed that it was not issued without this handstamp.

to be continued



POSTAL METER MARKS by MARK SPYCHER

Further to the article by C J Bettis in CAN No.26 of November 1986 I can give a few more details.

According to "GEOGRAFIA E HISTORIA DE CORREOS Y TELECOMUNICACIONES DE GUATEMALA" by Senor Pedro F Barreda which appeared in 1960 in Guatemala, the decree authorising the establishment of Meter franking machines was issued on 23 September 1947.

Barreda further writes that these machines would not interfere with the usage of postage stamps, circumstances permitting, "so that the public can make use of either franking system".

In 1954 there were in operation the following machines:-

60 with private persons and commercial houses in Guatemala City
7 - ditto - in the departmental capitals
7 in the Central Post Office
12 in the Post Offices at Quezaltenango, Puerto Barrios, Mazatenango, Antigua, Chiquimula, Zacapa, Cobán, Jutiapa, Huehuetenango, Flores Petén, Retalhuleu and Esquintla.

86 in total

Since Chris Bettis has seen a cover dated 13 February 1947 it is possible that a few machines were already in use before September 1947 and the official blessing was given only on the 23 September 1947.

In para.6, page 65, Barreda states that both "Universal" and "Pitney Bowes" are of American origin and made in Stanford, Connecticut, but Chris mentions ".... a German "Universal meter".

From what I have been able to find out Mr Arthur Pitney had formed the Pitney Postal Machine Company in 1902 which chnaged its name to the American Postage Meter Company in 1912. Owner of the Universal Stamping Machine Company was a Mr Walter Bowes and these two firms merged in 1920 to form the Pitney Bowes Postage Meter Company.

According to Barreda these machines were capable of printing and stamping, in one operation, 175 envelopes per minute.

Meter franking machines were approved for international use at a meeting of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in Madrid in November 1920 and the agreement became effective on 1 January 1922.

Any further comments or clarifications will be much appeciated, so that we will finally have a complete picture on this interesting aspect of modern postal history. A complete translation of Chapter III (1½ pages) of Barreda's work on this subject is sorely needed. Any volunteers?

ooOoo

I can confirm the variety mentioned by Finn Stjernholck in CAN No.28, page 82, regarding the 12c letter card of 1897. Several years ago I came across this, but somehow failed to take much notice.

I am currently engaged in studying the treatment of returned or dead letters, and would like to ask the help of our members in aswering some of the questions my studies have rasied.

1. what does "Rezagado" mean?
2. When did Spain establish a dead letter office?
3. When did Spain introduce DLO's in her colonies, and in particular in Guatemala, which was more or less the whole of Central America including Chiapas in Mexico?
4. When was this matter discussed in the UPU or established and when did it become effective?

COMMANDER HANFORD AND THE WARSHIP "ALERT" CAN No.25, September 1986

Apparently Commander Hanford was a prolific letter writer during his patrols of the coast of Central America. Harry Eisenstein of Illinois, sends us four photocopies of postal stationery cards he has, all sent by Commander Hanford from El Salvador.

REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR
TARJETA POSTAL
CON RESPUESTA PAGADA
Sta Ruth Hanford
Seattle, New York,
E. U. de America
30 MAY 1896
ESCRÍBASE DE ESTE LADO LA DIRECCION Y EN EL OTRO LA COMUNICACION.
SERVICIO INTERIOR
Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co New York.

NICARAGUA

"The Postal Rates of Nicaragua", (Issue 26, November 1986) drew a most interesting, if confusing, response from Robert Taylor, who has carefully examined the covers in his possession, with some strange results.

First the facts! The date of the rate change in 1911 can be pinpointed with a little more accuracy, since Robert has a December 3rd cover still at the 35c rate. However a December 16th postcard is in his possession franked at the new 15c rate, and so the rate change must have been between these dates.

The doubt regarding the 25c AR fee for foreign mail for 1911-13, is lifted with the existence of several examples, as is the 5c AR fee of 1913.

Robert adds "The rate table seems correct until sometime in mid-1914 after which it will be interesting to compare a number of covers and see what we come up with." He goes on to list 16 covers, only 6 of which agree with the table. Some are probably errors, but 4 covers suggest a later single letter rate of 3c with 7c registration. They are:

October 1915	Reg (15g)	rate 10c
September 1916	Reg (15g)	rate 10c
December 1916	Reg (15g)	rate 10c (B'fields)
March 1917	Reg (52g)	rate 16c

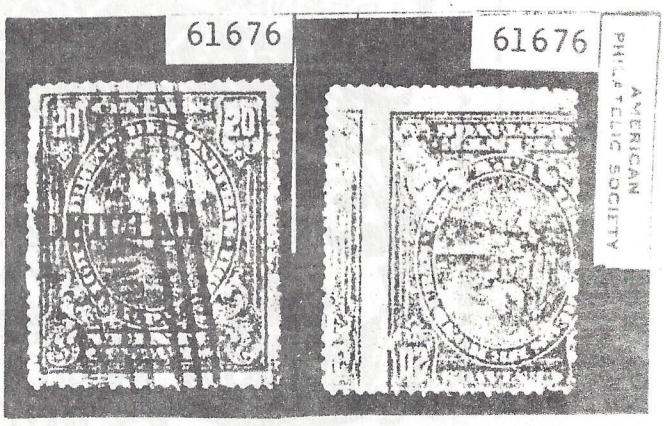
Clearly there is much to be done to establish rates beyond the table given, and your Editor would welcome correspondence on this subject.

Secondly the confusion! Robert lists many covers, with rates that do not fit the table. Several for instance from Zelaya are at the 1905-11 rates; ten covers from January 1909 to November 1911 are known with a 15c rate, plus 15c registration.

Again correspondence on the subject would be welcome.

A NEW HONDURAS VARIETY by CLYDE MAXWELL

I am pleased to report that I have found a copy of Scott 031, SG 0153, 20c yellow with red overprint "OFICIAL" on the face which has a clear impression of the basic stamp, Scott 136, SG 0153, on the reverse The reverse impression is without overprint and is inverted with respect to the face, and considerably off centre.



The stamp has an APS certificate, and I would be pleased to hear from any of your readers who may have other copies of this variety or could furnish further information.

overprint is in blue but stamps of 3, 12 and 24c are known overprinted in black.

In the same year, the issue was overprinted with a wheel and it was in that form that it circulated.

Acknowledgement of Receipt Stamps

In February 1897 two acknowledgement of receipt stamps were issued. The vignette consists of a number according to the value, with fine traced work in the background. They were printed by engraving on thin paper, and perforated 12.

Both stamps are of equal value (5c) green but one was printed on watermarked paper and the other not.

Reprints were made of the stamps on paper without watermark, on thick paper.

Figure 21.
Stamp corresponding to the issue for Acknowledgement of Receipt.

Figure 22.
Penalty stamp printed by Seebeck for El Salvador.

Postage Due Stamps

First Issue

On October 1st 1895 eight postage due stamps were issued carrying on the vignette with the number corresponding to the value. They are printed by engraving and perforated 12. All the stamps are olive brown.

The values are as follows:-

1c	10c
2c	15c
3c	25c
5c	50c

All the values were reprinted on thicker paper with different shades.

Second issue

On January 1st 1896 this series which consists of 16 stamps was issued, 8 on paper without watermark and 8 on paper with watermark. Both groups have the same designs and colours differing only in the watermark.

They are printed by engraving and perforated 12. They are all red with the same values as in the previous issue.

All the stamps with and without watermark were reprinted on thicker paper and in a different shade.

Third issue

On January 1st 1897 there was a new issue of postage dues which only differ from the previous ones on their colour for they are all dark blue. They are printed on paper without watermark.

Reprints were made of all the values in blue on thicker paper.

Fourth issue

In January 1898 (supposedly January 1st) the fourth series of postage dues was issued. They continued to use the same design and in every respect (values, type of print, perforation etc.) the stamps are identical to the previous ones, but the colour was changed to dark lavender.

Reprints were made of all the values on thicker paper.

Fifth issue

In 1899 a new series of postage dues was issued, using the same vignette as had been used until then, but again changing the colour, this time to orange. The same 8 values were repeated which had been issued in the four previous series and they were printed on paper with and without watermark. The stamps howver were not circulated, and the catalogues only quote them as mint. That same year 1899, the stamps were overprinted with the wheel which had been used on the ordinary and official stamps which had been circulated that year.

Registration Stamps

In February 1897 four 10c stamps were issued for the payment of registered mail.

The stamps are:-

10c brown red with watermark
10c dark blue with watermark
10c brown red without watermark
10c dark blue without watermark

Reprints were made of the four stamps on thicker paper.

Figure 23.
Stamp with the effigy of General Gutierrez for registered mail

Figure 24.
Stamp representing Hermes for the payment of postal parcels

Parcel Post Stamps

In 1895 a series of five stamps was issued for the payment of postal parcels. The stamps, in the shape of a rhombus, show Hermes, messenger to the Gods. They were printed by engraving and perforated 12.

The issue consists of the following values and colours:-

5c orange brown
10c slate blue
15c red
20c orange
50c green

Envelopes, Wrappers and Postcards

As a part of his contract, Seebeck was to hand over to the Government of El Salvador, envelopes with printed stamps, wrappers for printed matter and postcards. The delivery of this type of material is registered in the publications of the time, although the information we can collect is incomplete for it only covers up to the year 1896 inclusive.

During the years from 1890-1896 the following different postal items were issued:-

100 envelopes
32 wrappers for printed matter
39 postcards

Chapter VI

HONDURAS

Seebeck left El Salvador after signing a contract with that country on March 27th 1889 as we have seen in the previous chapter and he went over to Honduras where he signed a contract on April 20th 1889. It was published in "La Gaceta" on April 29th of the same year and it says as follows:

Secretary of State in the Home Office
Tegucigalpa, 20th April 1889

The Government AGREES:

To approve the contract agreed between the Director General of Taxes and Snr Nicolas F Seebeck which says:

"Roque Jacinto Muñoz, Director General of Republic Taxes and Sr Nicolas F Seebeck as secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving and Printing Co of New York, agree the following contract:

1 - Sr. Seebeck, as representative of the above named company promises to provide, at no cost to the Government of Honduras, the necessary kinds of stamps for the postal service for the franking of correspondence dispatched within or outside of the Republic. This agreement will last for ten consecutive years from this date. The quantities, classes and values of the types will be determined by the Government and executed by the Company in accordance with the designs the former will deliver to the offices of the Company no later than April 1st each year.

2 - The Government of Honduras agrees to circulate during the ten year term, only those stamps supplied by the Company; undertaking to modify annually the designs so that the issues corresponding to each twelve month period are completely different to previous and successive ones, but the type to be adopted for each annual series must be uniform for the twelve month term.

3 - The stamps will be engraved by the Company on steel plates, with the necessary artistic attention, so that they cannot be forged. The quantities and types of each annual issue will be the following:
Two million adhesive stamps;
Twenty five thousand sealable envelopes;
Ten thousand postcards;
Ten thousand stamped bands for newspapers.

4 - The examples must be handed over by the Company to the representative of the Honduras Government in New York, no later than November 15th of the year previous to their circulation. It is a required condition that before verifying the delivery of the stamps, the moulds or engraving

plates, must be deposited in the Safe Deposit Company of New York's offices, under seal of the Consul of Homduras in New York, from whence the aforementioned plates may not be removed except under the conditions expressed hereafter.

5 - The Company is obliged not to issue a greater quantity of the types agreed with the Honduras Government than those which the instructions express which in effect free the Government from the specific, allowing the nature of the order to specify values, colours and distinguishing features of each of the issues.

6 - The Government for its part is obliged to send the necessary instructions, models, portraits, forms and photographs in order that the New York Company may fulfil its contract, arriving in New York on the month and day indicated, according to Article 1.

7 - To compensate the expenditure made by the Company in the printing and issuing of the postage stamps referred to in this contract, the Government of Honduras agrees to surrender to the named Company the stock of the same stamps which they have at the end of each of the years of this contract previous to the declaration nullifying the value of the said stocks by the Honduras Treasury at the beginning of the new tax year. The transfer stipulated here must take effect whatever the excess quantity of stamps justified by this contract less their nominal value during their time in legal circulation.

8 - The stocks will be handed over, without any cost to the Company to the agent named in this principal to represent it to the Government. The said surrender will take place exactly thirty days after the end of the fiscal year for the ten year duration of the contract.

9 - It is the obligation of the Honduran Government to notify to its representative and to the printing Company the decree which nullifies the value and circulation of stamps used during the previous year, so that the said Company may withdraw from deposit the plates and break the seals referred to in Section four of this contract and also the said Company may make the reprints it deems necessary to sell the issues and various franked items to collectors.

10-The Government is obliged to declare the legal use and necessary circulation of the stamps hereby contracted, thirty days before they come into use in the postal service.

11-The printing Company is obliged, first of all, to hand over on December 1st of each year, at the latest, to the Government representative in New York a complete issue of all the new stamps, postcards, stamped envelopes, newspaper wrappers, in the quantities expressed in Section three, of the various values indicated by the Government. The Government in exchange and without other expense, will hand over to the Company the stocks it still holds thirty days after the date of receipt of the new issue. If the quantity and value of the stock of actual postage stamps is not sufficient to reimburse the Company through the sales made to collectors, the Government will allow the printing of the necessary quantity for which the Consul to Honduras in New York will have the work done, at the expense of the printing Company in the case where the plates exist for the issue actually in use.

12-The stamps, cards, envelopes and newspaper wrappers will carry the date of issue and will have a central design which will vary annually according to the instructions issued by the Government, and their colour will vary according to the alloted prices.

13-This contract must be presented to the Honduran Consul in New York so that, as his Government's representative he may ensure the exact fulfilment of the obligations stipulated herein. As proof it is signed in Tegucigalpa, on April 20th 1889.

Roque J Muñoz. Under Seal 'Republic of Honduras - Office of the Director General of Taxes - Tegucigalpa'."

Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co.
Nicolas F Seebeck, Secretary

TO BE SENT AND REGISTERED:

Stamped by the President - MARTINEZ

As part of the contract, clause 11 established that Seebeck should receive the remainders of the series issued in 1878 (Scott No 30-36) with the image of Morazán, which existed at the moment of the issue.

When Seebeck signed his contract he was aware that the remainders of that series which had been in circulation for 11 years, were depleted and consequently the available quantities would be scarce. Consequently when Seebeck returned to New York he convinced the Honduran Consul that it had already been decided to reprint those stamps. The original series had been printed in 1878 by the National Bank Note Co.. The reprint of the stamps on the other hand was assigned to the American Bank Note Co. and the cost of the work of reprinting was charged to Seebeck. The reprints were made on soft paper and with a yellowish gum different to that used in the first printing.

In relation to this, and other similar operations realised inside the limits of the Seebeck contracts, some suspicious minds have insinuated that the fact that the American Bank Note Co. did this work for the Hamilton Co. indicates that there were certain arrangements behind the scenes between the two firms. There have even been those who have suggested that this could have been a way of collecting debts when the poor Latin American nations were short of resources to pay for stamps already delivered to them.

At the end of 1889 the reprints were sent to Tegucigalpa where they were received by George Bernhard, Seebeck's representative in Honduras, and he in turn undertook to return them to New York together with the remainders available in Honduras.

According to information published in the Gazette of April 16th 1890, 778,638 stamps were sent to Seebeck of which the majority corresponded to the reprints recently produced by the American Co., for the remainders in existence at that moment possibly did not amount to 200,000 stamps.

There is evidence however that the American Co. did not send to Tegucigalpa all the reprints, for in the Decree of January 6th, 1890 which put into circulation the first series of Seebeck, it is noted that "the Consul General of Honduras in New York will place at the inspection of Snr Seebeck the stocks of the annulled issue still in the possession of the American Bank Note Co., the said Consul having to supply proof that the plates of the cancelled issue have been destroyed".

Seebeck printed fewer stamps for Honduras than for any other of the countries with which he signed the contract and it was the first country ro rescind. Altogether the Hamilton Co. only printed five ordinary series, some official stamps and some other related material. Let us study it.

First Issue

The first series of Seebeck Honduran stamps was issued on January 6th 1890. Like all the Hamilton stamps printed for Honduras the work was done by engraving, all perf 12.

The stamps depict in their vignette the coat of arms of Honduras, although they have different frames for each value. It consists of the following values and colours.

1c yellowish green
2c red
5c blue
10c orange
20c ochre
25c pinkish red
30c purple
40c dark blue
50c brown
75c blue green
1 peso carmine

No reprints were made of these first stamps, but in fact there was no need to make them as, according to the Gazette, No 792, August 12th 1891, when the second issue was circulated, there remained of the first issue of 2 million stamps, 1,611,771 stamps, or rather the number of stamps used during the year was scarcely 388,229.

To study the legal part of the Honduran issues, we are using an article by Irving L. Green and the translation by Gunther Wiese B. Equally in both the English and Spanish versions on transcribing Article 4 of the Decree of August 12th 1891, on talking of the fact that the Honduran Consul would hand over to Seebeck the remainders (the same as that written down in relation to the reprints of 1889) it says that there would be handed over to Seebeck "the part of the stock of the cancelled issue in possession of the printing Company (American Bank Note Co.)".

Here there must be an error by Green or by the Gazette for it should have said in possession of the Hamilton Bank Note Co., which was at that time in possession of the remainders as printer of the stamps of the first issue.

These stamps were handed over to George Bernhard who as we have noted was Seebeck's representative in Tegucigalpa.

Figure 25
Stamp of the 1st series printed by Seebeck

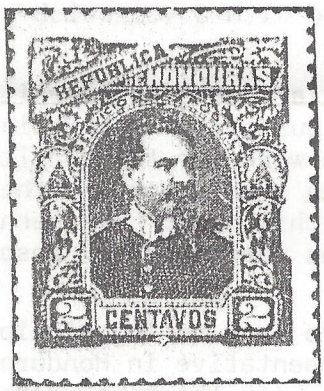


Figure 26
2 peso stamp of the 2nd Honduran issue

Figure 27
Stamp of the 3rd Honduran issue showing Columbus and Pinzon

Second Issue

Unlike the stamps of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Ecuador which were issued on 1st January each year, the stamps of Honduras were generally issued in the middle of the year. This second issue was issued on July 1st 1891, that is one and a half years after the first.

The stamps show General Luis Bográn who was at that time President of the Republic. The stamps were printed in two different formats, being those of 2, 5 and 10 pesos in a larger size, different designs and in two colours.

The series consists of the following values and colours:

1c dark blue
2c yellowish brown
5c blue green
10c vermilion
20c brownish red
25c magenta
30c slate
40c blue green
50c blackish brown
75c purple
1 peso brown
2 pesos sepia and black
5 pesos purple and black
10 pesos green and black

The stamps of 2 and 10 pesos are known to be printed on paper with the watermark of the House of Crane & Co, Dalton, Mass..

The remainders of this issue returned to Seebeck were still greater than those corresponding to the first for according to the Gazette of February 7th 1893, 1,771,943 of the 2 million stamps originally sent to Honduras were handed over to Bernhard.

Many people will wonder why the remainders were so great. Green alludes to this feeling in his interesting article when in those years the majority of the population was illiterate and the few who knew how to write had little confidence in the Government and so made little use of the postal system. As for private companies, they preferred to use local private postal systems which carried their correspondence from one part of the country to another. This also explains why genuinely used stamped envelopes are so hard to find. Possibly the greatest user of Seebeck stamps towards the United States was the New York and Honduras Rosario Mining Co. which at that time was exploiting the deposits of gold and silver found in San Juancito, near Tegucigalpa.

Third Issue

On August 1st 1892 the third issue appeared and like the issues that year in El Salvador and Nicaragua took as their theme the 400th Anniversary of the discovery of America. The stamps carry on their vignette the supposed images of Christopher Columbus and Martín Alonso Pinzón at the prow of their ship, looking towards the coast of Honduras. This is merely a liberty taken by the artist, for Columbus did not sight the coast of what is now Honduras until August 14th 1502 during his fourth voyage, and then he was not accompanied by Pinzón.

The stamps of this series are as follows:-

1c slate
2c dark blue
5c yellow green
10c bluish green
20c red
25c orange brown
30c ultramarine
40c orange
50c brown
75c lake
1 peso purple

Unlike the two previous series, there is no decree authorising this issue although in the Gazette of July 23rd 1892 there is an official notice authorising circulation from August 1st of the "new issue" but it does not specify clearly that to which it refers.

Fourth Issue

It is believed that this series was issued in the month of August 1893. It shows General Trinidad Cabañas. On all the stamps the central vignette is the same, but the frames are different.

1c green
2c scarlet
5c dark blue
10c orange brown
20c brownish red
25c dark blue
30c reddish orange
40c black
50c olive brown
75c purple
1 peso dark orange

There is no decree authorising this issue which seems to indicate that at that time both the Honduran Government and Seebeck were proceeding automatically, the latter delivering his usual annual series and the former circulating it in August.

Shortly after receiving this fourth issue it was decided in Honduras to install a new Government printing press to take charge of all Government printing, including the stamps.

The printing press operated under the name of Litografia Nacional, and in order to operate it Don Italo Ghizzoni was brought from Italy. He was a lithografic expert who besides directing the printing had responsibility to instruct the personnel in the art of design, lithography and engraving.

Ghizzoni urged vehemently the cancelling of the contract with Seebeck alleging that he would produce stamps of quality made in Honduras in the new peinting works. As the issue delivered in August 1893 was supposed to last until the middle of 1894, at the end of 1893 Ghizzoni gave assurances to the Government that the issue of Celeo Arias, the first to be made at the new printing works and which at that moment was in preparation, would be ready for August 1894. In the light of that on November 26th 1893 President Domingo Vázquez issued the following decree:

"The President of the Republic of Honduras
to his citizens

Gives notice that the National Congress resolved the following:

DECREE No 46
The National Congress Decrees:

Sole article: It disapproves the resolution of executive power of 20th April 1889 approving the contract between the Director General of Finance, Sr Roque J Muñoz and Snr Nicolas F Seebeck as Secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Engraving & Printing Co. of New York with the objective of supplying stamps necessary for the postal service of the correspondence (national and international) of the Republic.

Given in Tegucigalpa October 19th 1893

P V Williams, D.P.

Joaquín Soto, D.S. Sotero Barahona, D.S.

To the Executive power: - Therefore it must be executed.

Tegucigalpa, October 26th 1893"

Published in The Gazette, the Official Organ of the Government of the Republic.

The news was received with shows of satisfaction by all the philatelic press of the time. Thus, for example in the "Philatelic Journal of America" in its issue of December 1893 it commented:

> "Finally one of Seebeck's Central American Republics is to free itself from the yoke. Carlos Ferrari de La Ceiba writes that in the Official Gazette a decree has been published indicating that the Hamilton Bank Note Co. has been prohibited from printing Honduras stamps.
>
> From now on they will be printed in Honduras, according to our correspondent."

It seems however that Ghizzoni, the Government, or both, over estimated the capacity of the human team charged with managing the new printing works and the printing of the stamps began to fall behind, for Ghizzoni was a perfectionist, extremely exigent and intolerant of errors by his operators; as a result that first series could not be issued until January 1896. This forced them to have to turn to Seebeck for a new issue, the fifth and last.

Fifth Issue

Seebeck was annoyed and angered by the news that his contract had been rescinded, by the fact that he had not received the remainders of the Cabañas issue and finally being left with the series of the Statue of Justice already prepared; however, little by little things were getting better.